

4/12/16 week 16
Spring Mission Feeding: Last Week
Sheila Walsh
Living in Love #2

Sheila: Hi! Welcome to *LIFE Today*! My name is Sheila Walsh. It is my great privilege this week to interview two amazing people, James and Betty Robison. This is the week of your 53rd wedding anniversary. That is amazing!

James: And we're still crazy about each other.

Sheila: I love that!

James: Well, it is the truth.

Sheila: There was something you said on yesterday's program, you described Betty as a rose that could be easily bruised. Every woman wanted to write that down and leave it under her husband's pillow.

[Laughter]

"I'm a rose that can be easily bruised."

James: Well, the thing that drew me to her, not just that smile, and to be very honest she had a figure-fitting dress on and she'll still beautiful. I notice the whole package. But when she turned around and smiled at me, I buckled. I think I fell in love with her, (I was only 15 at the time) but that smile was awesome.

But after I got to know her, Sheila I realized that she is such a sweetheart that she could be easily bruised. And frankly, I think some of the ways I walked and the issues I faced and sometimes I failed, I hit you with some pretty good licks and I just hate it because I never wanted that to happen to this precious, precious rose.

I wish every man would understand how a woman wants to be loved and treasured and she doesn't want to be married to a pawn but she wants to feel like a queen married to a king who honors her. I've tried to do that. She has been so faithful and so helpful and so strong and so forgiving. And that beautiful smile! Excuse me, I'm about to leave here.

Sheila: There's such a beauty in that humility, James because I think it comes more natural for a woman to say, "Hey, I'm really sorry." I think for you, in your position to show that kind of humility is a beautiful example of the kind of man -- we think strength means somebody who can punch somebody's lights out. This is a godly strength.

James: I sometimes like to punch lights out.

Betty: Actually, he was easier to say "I'm sorry" than I was because I felt insecure in some ways. So I would put up a wall there; pride came in. A lot of times we don't intend for that to happen but I had to learn how to really come to the point, "I forgive" and "I'm sorry." It makes for a better relationship. He was always really good about that.

Sheila: Yesterday we left an unanswered question. We were talking about the difference in marriage between a covenant and a contract. You talk about it in your book and it was so eye-opening and huge to me. I would love for you to address that.

James: I want to actually turn to the page because I think credit should be given where credit is so well deserved. I actually referenced our pastor at Gateway Church, Robert Morris talking about commitment is a covenant not a contract; this is on page 38.

By the way, if you'd like to have the book, it is in the bookstores. You can get it online or through *LIFE Today* but we'll send it to you if you'd like to have it today. We'd be happy to send it just to say thank you for helping us put God's arms of love around others.

But on page 38 I reference something that Robert preached at Gateway but also, he wrote about it in a book, *The Blessed Marriage*. The fact is, Robert and I both got this from Jimmy Evans, who is one of our elders at Gateway and who has taught many times right here on *LIFE Today*.

Listen to these differences: In a contract you protect your rights and limit your responsibilities. In a covenant, you lay down your rights on behalf of the other person, the spouse and you assume responsibilities. In a contract your responsibilities are specified and restricted by the terms of the agreement. In a covenant all the responsibility is yours. A contract can be renegotiated, amended, or broken. A covenant is irrevocable, unconditional, and unbreakable.

I think if you can realize that in the relationship, the more we're willing to lay ourselves down, where Christ said to the man, "to love your wife like Christ loves the church." How sacrificial is that? I find myself having to go to God many times in course of a week and say, "Lord, am I where you want me to be?" It is pretty easy to see when you look at it in the light of his view.

You were talking about being willing to say, "I'm sorry." When you said that I find myself wanting to look out at all the people who are on television who may have ever seen me maybe where I didn't behave like I should. To realize that would hurt them, it breaks my heart. I have called many people and I realize they saw me express myself in a way that wasn't becoming of a Christian or a minister. And I would go see them or call them and say, "You know what? That was totally out of place." I have found that the willingness to do that is a healing factor in itself.

Sheila: One of the things you talk about that I think is probably not just in marriage but in the church, I sometimes think the church is crippled through lack of forgiveness, how we struggle to be able to forgive and misunderstand what it actually means to forgive.

Would you talk about why forgiveness is so key within a marriage?

Betty: Well, for me, and I would think he would be the same way, forgiveness, if you don't have forgiveness in your heart, it stops the communication, it stops the working of the marriage and the way God wants it to. It puts a halt, really, to your commitment to one another.

When we got married, we committed to one another. That doesn't mean that everything was going to go roses all of the time. We had our misunderstandings. We used to call them loud discussions but they were arguments. But we kind of smiled a little bit with "loud discussions."

But even with that, the commitment, even if we had a disagreement or something just really strong was going on between us that it might take awhile to work through it and everything, divorce never came to my mind. I trusted his love for me, even though we might disagree. I never thought about divorce.

What makes me sad today is so many times I think couples go into a marriage thinking, well, if this doesn't work I can always get out of it. That is not commitment.

Sheila: But that's how you approach a contract. You think you know what? We can renegotiate this or we can change this or we can find a way out. But in a covenant, the way that God's expressed his love to us, covenant love, there is no going back.

James: It impales the forgiveness that you referenced. If we're not willing to forgive and we have both given each other reason to forgive. I know Betty has had to forgive where I have missed the mark or I have failed. And had she not, what people don't realize is, your failure to forgive hurts you more than anybody. It actually puts the person that has the resentment and the bitterness and the ill will, it puts that person in prison. The other person may not be really trapped, they may be indifferent about it. But you mustn't be because you've been hurt.

I think both of us learned that we must refuse to live hurt and that God has told us to forgive and it is part of his nature. And this may sound strange but a couple of things that have been miraculously true in my life is I have never had a desire to pursue money or riches. It's almost as though opportunity pursued me because I so wanted to help others find success that it just wasn't something attractive but it is something you can be very grateful for and you can have if you have the right spirit and the right attitude. Well, I haven't had a love of money and appreciation for it, a recognition of the good it can do, a desire to give and to share.

But also -- that is a supernatural gift. The other supernatural thing is, I cannot not forgive. For me to forgive is as natural as breathing. It is supernatural in other words. If we hurt each other, I can't walk out of the room without resentment prevailing. I just can't. There is something inside of me that says that has been to be released. I really believe, Sheila that that is the power of God's spirit that really needs to fill all of us to overflowing so that that love leads us to forgiveness.

The other thing people need to realize is it is only part of the model prayer that Jesus came back and referenced at the end, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Then when he came back he said, "If you do not forgive others, you will not be forgiven." In other words, there is something happening in the relationship. In another instance he said, "Don't even come and try to worship when you've got aught against your brother."

I want to tell you something. That is huge. And no relationship will make it if we don't forgive. And God's grace enables us to do it.

Betty: I think it is so important like even, there have been times when we'd have a disagreement and he would have an appointment or something, he had to go out the door or I had an appointment, I could not get very far in my car without calling on the phone and saying, "Honey, I'm so sorry. I can't move on in my day without letting you know I'm sorry. I approached that wrong." Or vice versa, he would do the same for me. But it makes such a difference in your relationship.

We have fun together. We laugh together. We'll even laugh about some of the disagreements we've had. We forget, what were we arguing about?

Sheila: The other thing, I think is that the enemy has nothing in his arsenal to combat forgiveness. It completely disarms the enemy because part of it isn't natural. It is wonderful that you have the supernatural gift of you just want to forgive. We're not all like that. Sometimes we have to struggle to get there.

One of the things I taught my son when he was a little boy. He would say, "Mom, that's not fair."

I would say, "Baby, fair doesn't live here but Jesus does. And forgiveness is God's gift to us to live in a world that's not fair."

James: And now he's leading kids up at A&M, and excitement and prayer. He's having a blast; isn't he?

Sheila: He's absolutely having a blast. But you know what? This is just an aside. But I want you to know that you two have had an impact on the life of my son. There's been times when we've sat as a family and we've watched the show. When Christian was maybe 10 years old and he's a sharp -- I mean I'm his mom but he's amazing. But he's a sharp cookie and he said to me, "Mom, these people are real." That's been apparent to so many.

I also wanted to say your book, *Living in Love*, I'm a huge reader. I read all the time. I love to read. I read this because I knew I'd be interviewing you but I cannot emphasize enough the impact this book has had on my life. My husband and I said to each other, "I wish we had read this a few years ago, we would have made fewer mistakes." I really 100% commend this book. No matter what stage and age you're at in your marriage this book will make a huge difference.

James: We've decided we're in our mission fielding emphasis where we feed hundreds of thousands of children -- when I say "we," that includes every one of you who watch who say, "We want to, as Jesus said, give a cup of water in his name or give food and we want to relieve the suffering."

This week we're in the last week of our mission feeding emphasis. We're sending *Living in Love* to anyone who would like to have it who simply says, "I'll help feed some of those children that are in desperate need." We want to share it.

The reason that I actually felt comfortable about knowing that we would be taping these programs for this particular week on the exact day of our 53rd wedding anniversary, that we've got a lot of friends, I can actually look out in this audience and I see many people that we had the joy of leading to Christ. There are many people who came to the Lord or got closer to God in our meetings and many who are in ministry right now because of the impact the ministry has made.

So I thought, this week, if we could perhaps talk about marriage, which there are so few marriages today that stay together, and many of them that stay together, it's like an endurance to

exist. They don't really live, they just endure. They're not happy. If anything we can share, and you're looking at me right now and I wish I was in the room with you and you may say, "Well, I probably would break. I would probably weep." Well, I would want to hold your broken heart. I would want to be a healing factor.

In other words, if there is something we can say or share that would begin to rebuild the relationship or repair it or give you the grace that I referenced awhile ago that enables you to forgive supernaturally, that's the grace of God, which he offers. He has that supernatural enabling to impart it to us. We all need to receive it in so many other areas. You may look here at me and say, "James, I'm praying you'll have supernatural help in other areas." Me too! Let's agree on that. I want that.

But what we're doing this week is we're really hoping that we can somehow offer you a healing touch, a word of encouragement to know that God's going to carry you through, walk through this with you and that you'll get some kind of inspiration or insight that will help you.

That's the reason, Sheila, I wanted us to do this and you were so willing to be a part of it. I thank you.

Sheila: Gosh, it's my privilege. I've been studying through Matthew's gospel and I came to the place where Jesus said, when he was talking about the end, where we're finally home and he'll turn to some people and say, "I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and I gave me some water. I was in prison and you visited me."

They'll say, "Lord, when on earth did we ever do that? We would have loved to have done that but we didn't get the chance."

He said, "Whenever you did that for the least of these, you did it for me."

What a huge gift for a believer to be able to say, "I can do this. I can reach out in Jesus' name and I'm actually touching Christ."

James: Yeah, to the overlooked. Some of the greatest joys of my life have been walking over to people that you know thought nobody ever noticed. And just the fact that you notice sometimes breaks them. And then they're so anxious to hear your heart and have your prayer.

Everyone watching, if you've never just noticed through the eyes of Jesus somebody that looks overlooked, maybe they look sad, maybe they look lonely and just go over to them. Here's a good approach. "Excuse me. I don't mean to disturb you but I happen to be a Christian and God did something wonderful in my life and I believe in prayer. I don't know why but I just wanted

to ask, is there any way I can pray for you?" You're going to find sometimes people melt right where they are. I don't think many will punch you out. They may turn away and say, "No thank you." But at least you've been looking and responding to what you sense. I really encourage you to do that.

By the way, it works in marriage too. Betty, we've watched our relationship with the children; we didn't just watch their actions and their response to correction but we checked the atmosphere. What is the attitude like? Not just the action or the response. What's the atmosphere like? You could actually feel in our home an atmosphere of peace. A lot of our kids' friends wanted to come over because there was peace in the house.

Sheila: One of the things we're actually going to talk about tomorrow is we're going to talk about raising children. We're going to talk about intimacy in marriage so I'll know you'll tune in. We're going to talk about what it's like when the greatest heartache that could ever happen to a parent happens.

But the amazing thing to me about what we do through *LIFE Today* is that even though you've gone through the loss of a child you're reaching out to parents who have lost children all around the world and making sure that a generation of children never have to face that -- to break that cycle of poverty. Who knows when the next leader of an African country will rise up because our viewers reached out in Jesus' name?

James: I really believe that's true. I want to encourage you to be sure and watch tomorrow because what she just referenced, the fact that we will talk about rearing children. There is a difference in telling them and teaching them and training them. The average person knows more about training an animal, training a dog, than training a child. There really is a difference. You need to understand that. We have three children, 11 grandchildren and now a great grandson, and the thing is that we have watched how this works. To be able to see the beauty of truth applied in love consistently and the affect it has. And then for us to talk about the greatest heartache of our life, the only reason we would talk about losing this beautiful, beautiful girl is to try to help heal the broken hearts.

I just talked to Kenny, Robin's husband. Her son who graduated from Baylor and you saw him on the mission field, he just got engaged and this is a very exciting time. So I'm talking to Kenny this week, and this is Robin's husband and he said, "We've just been laughing so much here around the house."

I said, "What are y'all laughing about?"

He said, "We laugh about Robin. We laugh about mom all the time. We just laugh. Our kids get so excited talking about Robin."

This is the girl we lost. This is our daughter. This is our baby.

"Everything we think about Robin brings us so much joy. We just have the greatest time talking about how Robin and I would never argue around the kids. We'd go outside."

We used to watch them when they dated. They'd get time out on the porch but we knew what was going on.

He said, "We had a little fight in front of the kids one time and all of the sudden the kids started laughing at us fighting and I started laughing at Robin, the way she was fighting. And all of the sudden she started laughing and in the middle of her laughing she said, 'Stop it! You stop it! I'm not ready not to be mad. Stop it!'" [Laughing]

And he said, "When the kids said that again, we just literally laid on the floor and laughed."

I turned to Betty and I said, "Betty, to think that the joy our daughter gave is so eternal, so real, so Christ-like that that joy continues to bring forth fruit." That's what we want to talk about tomorrow.

Do y'all enjoy Sheila Walsh being on *LIFE Today*? Do you love this new team member? She is a part of the *LIFE Today* and *LIFE Outreach* family. Sheila, this is something Betty and I have been very comfortable doing, and you referenced doing it to the least of these. We are in our mission feeding and we're asking you in this last week, I want you to go with me and Betty back when we started more than 25 years ago. You'll see us in these wedding pictures, you'll see black hair and you'll see a younger couple. But you look beyond the couple and you look at the little faces that captured our heart forever and led to millions of people being saved, lives saved, and many millions coming to Christ. Watch closely.

On the mission field

James: There is no grip. The child was not breathing at all. We came in here and began to pray.

They just look like they're in a daze. They're coming here to get food.

God bless you little fella! That's great. The little children like this one here are so much fewer.

>> James, Betty, I can see how your hearts were broken through your many years of traveling throughout Africa. I will say this. It doesn't take long before you see a lot of beautiful work that's been done here through our missionary partners. I want to say we're not finished yet.

These children are dying. They're telling us every six seconds a child dies because of malnutrition.

Announcer: In Angola alone, the grim fact is malnutrition causes nearly half of children's deaths under the age of five. The sight of children struggling to live because they simply lack enough food to eat is the reason *LIFE Outreach* continues to go into the areas of Africa that are crying out for help. And in place of death, a bowl of food a day can literally become a miracle of life.

>> We must do more. Please! Whatever it takes, we have to reach out to little children like Joseph here. I can see it in his eyes almost. You probably can too where he's just hoping somebody will believe in him enough to reach out and rescue his life. The solution is really a simple bowl of food through mission feeding so these children can live.

End of clip

In the studio

James: You have no idea what it does to my heart to watch that little fella you just saw walk away with a bowl of nourishment that you gave, including the bowl. Thank you! Some of you watching, perhaps have never helped us reach out to the overlooked to do unto Jesus because you did it to the least of these. Would you join us? This has been so effective.

When African governments report that you have saved the lives of more than 10 million of their children; and then when the missionaries tell us that in those same areas, far more than 10 million people have trusted Christ because they've seen the love of God demonstrated. They didn't just hear about it, they saw it. And you made that possible. The missionaries went but they're not empty-handed. They always had a heart that overflowed but they didn't always have something to share. Thank you for making it possible.

So during this last week right now I'm asking for the greatest outpouring of love perhaps we'll ever witness where every one of you would say, "I'm going to feed some of those children." \$30 will feed three children for the next months; \$50 will feed five; \$100 will feed ten. A group of

our friends said, "We will match what you give for 50,000 of those children," which means those gifts will be doubled: \$30 now feeds six, \$50 feeds 10, \$100 feeds 20.

Would you right now please go to LifeToday.org, take your bankcard, use it like a check? Please always use it that way. Please do that! Or you can dial the number that people call when they need prayer, someone to agree with them, someone to share their heart with and that call is paid for by love too. But today I want you to dial that number, make a check, make it to *LIFE*, or use your bankcard just like you would if you went online and say, "Here's the gift I want to make today."

If there's any way you can give \$1,000 to feed 100 children, it will now go to 200. We would like send you *Living in Love*, if you'd like to have the book. We would love to send it to you. I think that there's someone in your life it will bless, and maybe your life or your marriage. I would hope so. And it may help you with your children or grandchildren. I pray it does! Please right now make the gift God put on your heart. Would you please do that? Thank you for doing it.

Begin video clip

Announcer: In remote and impoverished areas of Angola, Africa, families are suffering, crops have failed. There is no food. And those hit the hardest are the children.

In response to this crisis, Life Outreach has received a 50,000 children challenge that with your help will feed and minister to 100,000 children over the next few months. With previous food reserves gone and Angola facing a severe food shortage due to crop failure, this challenge could not have come at a better time to help replenish supplies for the feeding programs touching the lives of children across Angola, Mozambique, and Sudan.

The 50,000 children challenge means more children can be saved and your gift will have a double-impact helping to feed twice as many children. Your gift of \$30 to help feed three children will now be doubled to help feed six children! Gifts of \$50 to help feed five children will be doubled to help save ten. And gifts of \$100 for 10 children will be doubled to help feed and care for 20 children.

With a gift of \$1,000 or more you can double your impact to help feed 200 children. And also request the "Majesty" bronze sculpture featuring a beautiful buck in regal stance reflecting God's presence and majesty in all the earth!

This is the last week! Please call the number seen here, write LIFE, or go online today to LifeToday.org and make your life-saving, double-impact gift today!

End of clip

In the studio

Sheila: This week is all about celebrating your 53rd wedding anniversary. But what our viewers don't know, and maybe won't know for awhile is how much you have both helped Barry and I. We've been through some tough things in our marriage and you have helped us. You helped shore up where the cracks were. So as our anniversary gift to you we want to give a gift of \$1,000 because that will make such a difference with the bowls of food. But I just want to say from my heart and my home, thank you!

James: Well, we love you! Love you, Barry! Christian, we love you! Thank all of you here and thank all of you for your help. We'll be happy to send you *Living in Love* if you'd like to have it.

Be with us again tomorrow. I think we're going to talk about these things you mentioned and I'm excited about it. We're even going to talk about managing money, perhaps, a little more wisely.

Sheila: I think we'll start there. I think that would be a good place to start. Love you all. Thank you so much for joining us!